

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) Process for preparing maltitol enriched products, said process comprising the successive steps:

a) liquefying starch milk to a dextrose equivalent of from 2 to 25 and subjecting said liquefied starch milk to a saccharification step in the presence of beta-amylase and at least one debranching enzyme selected from the group consisting of pullulanases, iso-amylases and mixtures thereof, followed by the addition of alpha-amylase for obtaining syrup (A) containing at least 81% of maltose based on dry substance, wherein said saccharification is immediately followed by

b) fractionating said syrup (A) chromatographically, wherein the process conditions of said fractionation are selected in order to obtain a fraction (B) rich in maltose, wherein said fraction (B) comprises at least 96% maltose based on dry substance of fraction (B), wherein the recovery of maltose in fraction (B) is at least 80%,

c) catalytically hydrogenating fraction (B) to obtain a liquid maltitol enriched product (C) comprising at least 94% maltitol, and

d) increasing dry substance of liquid maltitol enriched product (C).

2-4. (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) A ~~Process~~ process according to claim 1 characterised in that step d) of said process is followed by the further successive steps of:

e) crystallizing product (C) by one or multiple crystallization steps to obtain crystalline maltitol intermediate (D) and liquid maltitol co-product (E), wherein intermediate (D) has a dry substance of at least 93% and comprises at least 97% maltitol based on dry substance, and

f) drying crystalline maltitol intermediate (D) to obtain crystalline maltitol product (F) of at least 98.5% dry substance and comprising at least 97% maltitol based on dry substance.

6. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 5 characterized in that step f) of said process is followed by fractionating chromatographically the liquid maltitol co-product (E), wherein the process conditions of said fractionation are selected in order to obtain a fraction (G) rich in maltitol, said fraction comprising at least 90% maltitol based on dry substance.

7. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 6 characterized in that crystalline maltitol intermediate (D), co-product (E), and/or fraction (G) and optionally water are mixed to obtain liquid maltitol product (H) containing at least 94% maltitol based on dry substance and having at least 50% dry substance.

8. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 5 characterized in that crystalline maltitol (F) has a purity of at least 98%.

9. (Canceled).

10. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 5 characterized in that crystalline maltitol (F) has a purity of at least 99%.

11. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 5 characterized in that crystalline maltitol (F) has a purity of at least 99.5%.